



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Innovative technology is helping AOT market Arizona as a premier travel destination to the country of Japan. Last week, AOT staff went to Japan to participate in a press conference announcing a new dynamic Internet travel game featuring Arizona. The game, World Heritage: the Five Stars, will launch on the Web site Ladyweb.org in January 2008 and is expected to receive 150,000 to 200,000 visits per day for an estimated two million visits for the one year that it will be active. This is a great interactive tool that will help the Asian community become more familiar with our amazing tourism destinations. Game players will be able to create a character and travel across the state learning about what the Grand Canyon State has to offer. This is an incredible opportunity to showcase Arizona in a truly original and vibrant manner that can help boost international visitation numbers to our state.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Arizona Tourism University (ATU) Presents How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy Workshop

ATU, the educational outreach program created by the Arizona Office of Tourism, is designed to educate statewide tourism organizations on tried and true tourism marketing tactics and the latest developments in the industry. The ultimate goal of ATU is to give communities the tools and resources they need to successfully develop their own tourism programs and to effectively work in partnership with AOT. The “How to Develop an Interactive Marketing Strategy” is a dynamic session that will present a wide range of interactive/online marketing topics in an easy to follow and practical format. Discussions will include fundamentals such as Web site basics, online advertising, e-mail campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), measuring campaigns as well as best practices and useful interactive marketing tips. In addition, the workshop will cover advance topics including trends in social networking, mapping, Web site analytics, user-generated content and video. To register for a workshop please contact Sarah Martins at smartins@azot.gov or by phone at 602-364-3687.

December 5, 2007

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Hotel Valley Ho

6850 East Main Street

Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

December 13, 2007

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Cochise College Benson Campus

Room 113

1025 State Route 90

Benson, Arizona 85602

AOT Launches Travel Deals

AOT launched the new and innovative Travel Deals section of the agency’s consumer Web site www.Arizonaguide.com. Travel Deals, formerly Arizona Vacation Values, was created as an opportunity for statewide businesses to post great new travel and vacation deals for visitors planning a trip to the Grand Canyon State. The Web site features cutting-edge technology including several new enhancements such as an easier search engine for visitors to find and compare great vacation ideas from all across the state. And businesses will find that the new technology will make it easier to post vacation deals and the ability to combine their travel deal with another business to create the ultimate travel and vacation package. To register and to post new deals, please visit the Travel Deals section of www.azot.gov. Your travel deal will then appear on the consumer Web site www.Arizonaguide.com.

Trippin’ with AOT

AOT Visits Tokyo and Osaka on Recent Sales Mission

During the week of November 5th, AOT’s Japan representative, Osamu Hoshino coordinated a sales mission to Japan which targeted tour operators and travel agents in Tokyo and Osaka. The seminar format was very well received and record breaking attendance was achieved in both cities with more than 140 attendees in Tokyo and 60 attendees in Osaka. The AOT delegation also participated in press conference to announce the new Internet travel game featuring Arizona. The game, World Heritage: the Five Stars, will launch on the Web site Ladyweb.org in January 2008. For more information, contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

Industry News

TIA Projects Modest Growth in Travel in 2008

The U.S. travel industry is expected to post moderate gains in nearly all sectors again in 2008, according to the annual Travel Industry Association (TIA) forecast. Travel spending by domestic and international visitors in 2008 is forecast to increase 5.2 percent, to \$778.2 billion, up from projected full-year 2007 travel spending of \$740 billion, which would be a 5.7 percent increase over 2006. Domestic leisure trips are expected to continue an upward trend of modest growth in 2008, climbing 2 percent to 1.6 billion trips. Domestic leisure trips are expected to finish 2007 up 2.5 percent over last year. Travel for business in 2008 is expected to remain stable, increasing by 0.4 percent, registering nearly 502 million trips. This slight increase will offset a projected decline of 1.7 percent in business travel for 2007, compared with a year ago. International travel (including visitors from Canada and Mexico) to the United States is expected to rise 3.7 percent in 2008 to 55.6 million visitors, following a projected 5.1 percent increase for 2007. However, the year-over-year data mask an 11 percent decline in overseas visitors to the U.S. from 2000 – 2007. Overseas travelers, primarily from Western Europe and Japan, represent the United States' top inbound visitors and spend the most money. Although overseas travel is expected to increase slightly in 2007, it has yet to surpass the 2000 level, despite the weak dollar making the U.S. a travel bargain.

Airlines Adding Staff for Holiday Rush

Seeking to avoid further problems in what already is a record year for travel delays, major airlines have pledged to increase staffing and take other steps during the busy Thanksgiving holiday travel period. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters conducted a 50-minute conference call late Thursday with representatives from the FAA, major airlines, airports and aviation trade groups to discuss their plans for the holiday. The industry plans to hire seasonal employees to help out at check-in kiosks and gate areas, among other plans for dealing with the busy holiday travel period. The industry also pledged to have senior executives participate in daily FAA briefings and to monitor busier airport hubs personally. (AP; *Arizona Republic.com/Business*)

Survey: Age, Gender Make Much Difference in Tour Sales

Do age and gender make a difference for motivation in selecting packaged tours? Yes, for sure, says a survey conducted for the US Tour Operators Association. "The survey found that men are less price-conscious than women, while women are more concerned with value offered by a given tour or vacation package," said the survey. Women also respond to more inclusions such as meals and sightseeing in the price, while men prefer a broader choice of side trips. Safety is another drawing point for women. Men, however, cite companionship and meeting new friends as reasons for buying a tour or vacation package. "Contrary to popular belief, younger people — 18 to 34 year olds — may be more likely to take a tour or a vacation package than their older counterparts," the survey said. Younger respondents scored highest across the board for potential to take a tour or vacation package, while surprisingly, those aged 65+ scored the lowest. According to the survey, travelers aged 18-34 are more likely to buy a tour or vacation package for the following reasons:

- To see new or unfamiliar places.
- To find out more about the history or culture of an area.
- To enjoy greater convenience.
- To learn a new skill like cooking or photography.

More U.S. Airports Adding International Flights

U.S. airlines' race to boost international flying is expanding service at U.S. airports beyond the traditional gateways. For January, airlines have scheduled 1,790 foreign departures a day from continental U.S. airports, 4.7 percent more than a year earlier, according to a USA Today analysis of data from OAGback Aviation Solutions. Though Miami and New York's JFK remain the busiest airports for international flights, places such as Fort Lauderdale, Windsor Locks, Conn., Cleveland and Denver have seen double-digit annual growth. Each of the six traditional U.S. airlines--American, United, Delta, Continental, Northwest and US Airways--have been boosting international markets, partly due to cutthroat competition in the domestic market. *(Page 4B, USA Today)*